

Assessment Report

Background

Nina is going into the fifth grade and is currently in a summer camp program run by the YMCA. Math is her favorite subject and she claims that she does not like to read or be read to. Nina likes to shop and enjoys being outside and swimming in the summer time. One book that she has read and claims to have liked is a book called Finally, which is about a girl who is turning twelve and the things that are occurring and changing in her life. She had purchased it at a book sale at school and said she had picked it because the cover had looked interesting and "cool." She claimed to have finished the book but could not give me an overview of the big ideas, but did recall specific details. Overall, she has a happy disposition and is a very cooperative student.

Assessment Format

Nina was first asked to orally read graded word lists. I started her at the third grade level since she is going into fifth grade and that appeared to be at her instructional level and then when she read the fourth grade list, she was just at her frustration level. After this, she orally read four passages, an expository and a narrative passage for both the third and fourth grade levels. After she read each passage, she retold what she remembered and answered explicit and implicit questions from the text. These exercises were used to evaluate Nina's word identification accuracy, word identification fluency, and her comprehension.

Word Identification Accuracy

Nina read graded word lists on levels three and four. She scored at an instructional level for the third grade list and at frustration level for the fourth grade list. This led me to believe that she would read independently on a second grade level, however I never gave her a word list for the second grade. On the third grade list she scored an 80% missing four words: engines (ignus), clothing (clothe), interested (interest), and entrance (entrace). She identified all words almost immediately which led me to believe she simply looked at the words beginning letters or blends and guessed the first word that came to her mind or simply skipped over letters as she sounded out the words. Because this was our first day together I also thought some of her missed words could have been attributed to nerves. On the fourth grade word list Nina scored a 65%, taking more time to look at the words and give an answer and mispronouncing seven words: engine (energy), adaptation (adoption), illustrated (illusted), pilot (plot), fame (frame), guarded (graduated), and adventurer (adventure). This word list was clearly at Nina's frustration level and I could see she was guessing familiar words but she didn't seem to be looking at the letters within the word but simply guessing the word based on sight.

This trend continued in her reading of the passages. It occurred less during the narrative passages because I felt she could better comprehend the passage and guess the correct words. In the expository texts, however, she had more instances of

guessing the words and causing meaning changes which ultimately led to the passage being at her frustration level.

Word Identification Fluency

When reading the list words, Nina pronounced almost all of the words quickly, that is she did not pause to decode them, but she was not always correct. I could see that speed was important for her because she would often mispronounce a word, say "whatever," and keep going without trying to decode the word correctly. Nina orally read the narrative third grade passage at 121 words per minute as well as corrected words per minute and the narrative fourth grade passage at 114 words per minute and 111 corrected words per minute. For the expository third grade text, she read the passage at 112 words per minute and 111 corrected words per minute, where as the fourth grade expository passage was at 98 words per minute and 95 corrected words per minute. This range is something to be noticed for her speed quickly dies down as she encounters texts at her frustration level.

Comprehension

Before orally reading the third and fourth grade passages, Nina answered some questions referring to the text she was about to read which would determine her familiarity with the content in the passage. Her answers indicated that she already knew quite a bit about class trips and Johnny Appleseed (the topics of the narrative texts), which suggested it would be easier for her to comprehend than the expository texts of which she was much less familiar. This proved to

be accurate when Nina was asked follow up questions at the end of each passage in which she could answer far more questions correctly from the narrative passages than from the expository passages.

After reading each passage, Nina was asked to retell what she had read. Nina only mentioned 4-7 things from the expository texts and 12-13 from the narrative. While the narrative recalling is much more descriptive, there were still up to 57 items she could have recalled. She was then asked to answer both implicit and explicit questions from the passages. In both of the narrative passages for the third and fourth grade levels, Nina appeared to be at the instructional level (answering 6-7 questions correctly), however for both of the expository texts for the third and fourth grade, she was at her frustration level, even with look backs (answering only 2-5 questions correctly). At this point, I decided to stop with the passages because she was clearly at frustration with the expository texts and I had already picked up on areas we could work on such as comprehension, vocabulary, and thinking aloud.

Summary and Recommendations

Nina demonstrated her ability to refer back to prior knowledge which helped her answer implicit questions and also shows strength in reading with expression and being aware of punctuation. However, word identification and comprehension seem to be an issue. Nina seemed to be more concerned with merely finishing the passage than actually understanding it or decoding the words that were unfamiliar. Some words which she would read correctly once would be

mispronounced later in the passage and I came to believe she was looking at the beginning of the word instead of the word as a whole. She would often reply, "whatever," as she read meaning, "I know this is wrong but I'm going to keep going." Her reading rates are acceptable for her age, but I think it would be beneficial for her to slow down and make sure the words she pronounces make sense in the sentence. This carelessness in pronunciation inevitably affect her comprehension because she may never have actually read the correct answer the question is looking for.

Nina needs to begin by reading easier books and thinking-aloud as she reads, asking herself, "does this make sense?" She would benefit from retelling activities and graphic organizers she could complete to keep track of the big ideas or important information in the text. Once you get her talking about the text, however she is great at coming up with questions and making predictions based on what she has learned from the text. Making sure to incorporate these kinds of activities within retelling activities will help boost her confidence and motivate her to focus on what she is reading.

One area that I did not get to work on extensively with her was reading and discussing expository texts. I began with narrative texts because that was her strength and I wanted to boost her confidence. I also focused on retelling and comprehension strategies that could be applied to expository texts later. This was clearly an area of struggle for Nina, but with the right tools and strategies I believe she would become more confident and then successful with such texts.

I enjoyed very much working with Nina. She is talkative and has a happy-go-lucky personality. Although she claimed to dislike reading when I first met her, she was a good sport for each and every activity we did and claimed to enjoy the book, Holes, I had brought for us to read. She began to read with such expression and told me she missed reading it over our weekend apart. I believe if you enthusiastically present her with a book she could run with it but would need to be monitored in her comprehension of what she read.